

What is claimed is:

1. A license plate for attachment to a motor vehicle, the license plate comprising
5 auxiliary data steganographically embedded therein.

2. The license plate according to claim 1, wherein the motor vehicle comprises at
least one of a car, truck, sport utility vehicle, motorcycle, trailer to be pulled by a motor
vehicle, motor home, plane, golf cart, boat, tractor, bus and off-road vehicle.

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3. The license plate according to claim 1, wherein the auxiliary data is
steganographically embedded in the license plate in the form of a digital watermark.

4. The license plate according to claim 3, wherein the digital watermark comprises
15 an orientation component.

5. The license plate according to claim 3, wherein the auxiliary data comprises two
or more payload fields.

20 6. The license plate according to claim 5, wherein at least a first of the payload
fields includes first plural-bit data to uniquely identify the motor vehicle.

7. The license plate according to claim 6, wherein the first plural-bit data
comprises a reduced-bit representation of a vehicle identification number (VIN) assigned to
25 the motor vehicle.

8. The license plate according to claim 6, wherein the first plural-bit data
comprises a cryptographic permutation of a vehicle identification number (VIN) assigned
to the motor vehicle.

9. The license plate according to claim 6, wherein the first plural-bit data comprises a vehicle identification number (VIN) assigned to the motor vehicle.

5 10. The license plate according to claim 5, wherein at least a second of the payload fields includes second plural-bit data to be used to reference documentation associated with at least one of the motor vehicle and an owner of the vehicle.

10 11. The license plate according to claim 10, wherein the documentation comprises at least one of vehicle registration card, disabled placard, cargo manifest, vehicle insurance document, vehicle title, a driver's license and a trip permit.

15 12. The license plate according to claim 3, wherein the auxiliary data comprises an identifier to be used to interrogate a data structure, the data structure comprising information associated with the vehicle or with an owner of the vehicle.

20 13. The license plate according to claim 1, wherein the license plate comprises a sticker or tag, and wherein the auxiliary data is steganographically conveyed via the sticker or tag.

25 14. A method of providing authenticating information for a property title document, said method comprising steps of:
 receiving a first digital signature that is associated with a seller of property;
 receiving a second digital signature that is associated with a buyer of the property;
 using the first digital signature and the second digital signature to provide a digital watermark payload, the payload comprising authenticating information; and
 steganographically embedding the digital watermark payload in the property title document.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the authentication information comprises the first digital signature and the second digital signature.

5 16. The method of claim 14, wherein the authentication information comprises a cryptographic permutation of at least one of the first digital signature and the second digital signature.

10 17. The method of claim 14, wherein the authentication information comprises an output of a function which includes the first digital signature and the second digital signature as inputs.

18. The method of claim 14, wherein at least one of the authentication information, first digital signature and second digital signature comprises a time or date stamp.

15 19. The method of claim 14, wherein the property comprises at least one of a motor vehicle, personal property and real property.

20 20. The method of claim 14, wherein the authentication information comprises a reduced-bit representation of at least one of the first digital signature and the second digital signature.

21. The method of claim 14, wherein the property title document comprises at least one of an electronic document and a printed document.

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22. A method to authenticate documentation associated with a motor vehicle, the documentation comprises plural-bit auxiliary data steganographically embedded therein, the auxiliary data comprising at least an identifier, said method comprising:

- receiving optically captured image data that corresponds to the documentation;
- 5 analyzing the image data to obtain the identifier, wherein the identifier includes or links to information to uniquely identify the motor vehicle; and
- providing a signal in response to the identifier being obtained.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein the identifier is intertwined with another
10 identifier, the another identifier being steganographically embedded in different documentation, the different documentation also being associated with a motor vehicle.

24. The method of claim 22, wherein the documentation comprises at least one of
15 an emissions document or sticker, a license plate, an insurance card, disabled placard, cab or taxi documentation, a trip permit, a cargo manifest, a registration document, an inspection sticker or document, and a motor vehicle title.

25. The method of claim 22, wherein the information further comprises a listing of
20 drivers who are authorized to operate the motor vehicle.

26. A method to facilitate transfer of a motor vehicle from a seller to a
buyer, said method comprising:

- receiving into a first data record information associated with the motor vehicle or the seller of the motor vehicle;
- 25 providing the buyer of the motor vehicle with a digitally watermarked object, the digital watermark comprising an identifier;
- associating the identifier with a second data record, the second data record including information associated with the buyer of the motor vehicle;
- associating the first data record with the second data record;

upon presentment of the digitally watermarked object, receiving optically captured scan data representing the digitally watermarked object, and analyzing the scan data to obtain the identifier, said method further comprising accessing at least the second data record via the identifier.

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27. The method of claim 26, further comprising accessing the first data record.

28. The method of claim 27, wherein the first data record and the second data record are associated via the identifier.

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29. The method of claim 27, further comprising presenting at least some of the information that is associated with the motor vehicle or the seller of the motor vehicle to the buyer through a computer interface.

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30. The method of claim 29, further comprising prompting the buyer to confirm the transfer through the computer interface.

31. The method of claim 30, further comprising automatically notifying at least a government agency after the buyer confirms the transfer.

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32. The method of claim 26, wherein the motor vehicle is purchased through an auction.

33. The method of claim 30, wherein the information associated with the buyer comprises an account number, said method further comprising automatically debiting the account after the buyer confirms the transfer.

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34. The method of claim 33, further comprising generating a printed title document after the buyer confirms the transfer.

35. A printed document comprising:
a document identifier;
a first digital watermark including a first payload, the first payload comprising a representation of the document identifier;
- 5 a second digital watermark including a second payload, the second payload comprising at least a reduced-bit representation of the first payload.
36. The document of claim 35, wherein the document is associated with a motor vehicle.
- 10 37. The document of claim 36, wherein the document identifier comprises a vehicle identification number (VIN).
38. The document of claim 35, wherein the document comprises information
- 15 printed therein, and wherein said second payload further comprises a representation of at least a portion of the printed information.
39. The document of claim 35, wherein the second digital watermark is imparted to the document through laser engraving.
- 20 40. The document of claim 35, wherein the reduced-bit representation of the first payload comprises a hash.
41. The document of claim 35, wherein the reduced-bit representation of the first
- 25 payload comprises a cryptographic permutation.

42. The document of claim 35, wherein the document comprises variable information printed thereon, and wherein the second digital watermark comprises at least some of the variable information, wherein the variable information varies from document to document.

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